



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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## **Commercial Harvest of Snowy Grouper in South Atlantic Waters Will Close on June 30, 2015**

Commercial harvest of snowy grouper in South Atlantic waters will **close, at 12:01 a.m. (local time) on June 30, 2015**. Commercial harvest will reopen at 12:01 a.m. (local time) on January 1, 2016. The 2015 commercial catch limit is 82,900 pounds gutted weight. Reports indicate that landings are approaching the 2015 catch limit for the commercial sector.

The operator of a vessel with a federal commercial permit for snapper-grouper that is landing snowy grouper for sale must have landed and bartered, traded, or sold such snowy grouper prior to 12:01 a.m. (local time), June 30, 2015. The prohibition on sale does not apply to sale or purchase of snowy grouper that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 a.m. (local time), June 30, 2015, and held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

During the closure:

- Harvest or possession of snowy grouper is limited to the recreational bag and possession limits.
- Sale and purchase of snowy grouper is prohibited.
- The closure applies in both state and federal waters for a vessel with a federal commercial permit for snapper-grouper.

This closure is necessary to protect the snapper-grouper fishery.

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council has developed a fishery management plan amendment that would increase the ACL from 82,900 pounds whole weight to 115,451 pounds whole weight. If landings are below the ACL, the commercial sector could be reopened later this year.